



# Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

## Employment First: Why, What, and How?

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# Do you believe people with disabilities can work?

Why?

Why Not?



# What are your hopes/dreams...

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- For yourself?
  
- For your sons/daughters?
  
- For the people with disabilities that you support?



**What is the answer to fulfilling these hopes, dreams, goals?**

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**Employment!**



## Can you guess...

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- The labor force participation rate for people with disabilities?
- Unemployment rate for people with disabilities?



# Employment First

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- ❑ Presumes that people with disabilities can and should work
- ❑ Creates an expectation that people with disabilities, like everyone else, will have to “opt out” of employment rather than “opt in”
- ❑ Provides a fundamental change in philosophy, policy, and resources related to employment of people with disabilities



# A National Movement

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- ❑ 26 states – official Employment First policy
  - ❑ Passed legislation in 11 states
  - ❑ Policy directive, Executive Order, or similar policy statement in 15 states
  - ❑ 12 of the above have cross-disability policies
  - ❑ 14 of the above focus exclusively on intellectual and developmental disabilities
  
- ❑ 12 additional states – efforts, activities, initiatives



## Results – Washington State

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- ❑ Implemented an “employment first policy” in 2006
  
- ❑ Report the following percentage of people with I/DD in integrated employment:
  - ❑ 53% in 2004
  - ❑ 87% in 2008
  - ❑ 88% in 2009
  - ❑ 89% currently





## NJ's Employment First Initiative

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- ❑ Announced by Governor Christie on April 19, 2012
- ❑ “Competitive employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred post education outcome for people with any type of disability.”



# Employment First Implementation

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- ❑ Individualized Service Plan must include at least one employment related outcome
- ❑ Expanded employment-related service options in the Supports Program & CCW Renewal



# Employment First Implementation

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- ❑ Revising the Memorandum of Understanding – DDD, DVRS, CBVI
- ❑ SELN membership – work plan development



# Additional Considerations for Employment First

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- ❑ Data collection/sharing
- ❑ Statewide goals
- ❑ Outcomes based funding/incentives
- ❑ Building capacity with service providers



## Additional Considerations for Employment First

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- ❑ Training & technical assistance for Support Coordinators
- ❑ Interagency collaboration/innovation



# Ultimately, EF is about jobs! So, how do we find them?

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- ❑ Identify what the job seeker has to offer the workforce – skills, strengths, experience, unique abilities
- ❑ Consider – preferences, challenges, support needs



# Ultimately, EF is about jobs! So, how do we find them?

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- ❑ Tap into your network!!!!
- ❑ Determine employer needs – remember that the right job match isn't always an existing position



## Who can help?

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- ❑ One-Stop Career Centers
  - ❑ Computer access, training opportunities, resume writing, information about the local labor market, etc.
  
- ❑ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) or Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI)





# Who can help?

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- ❑ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)



# Expanded DDD funded Services/Supports

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- ❑ Supported Employment – Individual
- ❑ Supported Employment – Small Group
- ❑ Career Planning
- ❑ Prevocational Training

**\*\*Please note:**

- ❑ **Individuals should access employment services through DVRS before utilizing DDD for these services**
- ❑ **An individual can access DDD services when s/he is receiving employment services through DVRS**



## What works?

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- ❑ Opportunities in the workforce
  - ❑ Students who have had paid work experiences are 2-1/2 times more likely to be in paid jobs after graduation
  
- ❑ Expectations
  - ❑ Family – 3.6 times more likely to be in paid jobs after graduation



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**QUESTIONS?**